DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 392 919 CE 071 045

TITLE	Career Preparation Assessment. Portfolio Guidelines.
INSTITUTION	Far West Lab. for Educational Research and Development, San Francisco, Calif.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	95
CONTRACT	RP91002006
NOTE	46p.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Instructional Materials (For Learner) (051)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Career Awareness; *Career Education; Communication Skills; Employment Potential; *Employment Qualifications; Guidelines; High Schools; Interpersonal Competence; Occupational Safety and Health; *Performance Based Assessment; *Portfolio Assessment; *Portfolios (Background Materials); Problem Solving; Records (Forms); *Self Evaluation (Individuals); Standards; Technological Literacy; Thinking Skills

ABSTRACT

This guide contains the materials and guidelines required to complete a Career Preparation Assessment (CPA) portfolio, which is a classroom-tested, employer-validated, performance-based assessment of career readiness skills for use by all high school students. The guide is divided into two parts. Part 1 is an overview of the CPA process that includes information on the following topics: the history and objectives of CPA; usefulness of a CPA to students, teachers, employers, and parents; the personal, interpersonal, thinking/problem-solving, communication, employment literacy, and technological literacy skill standards constituting the Career Preparation Standards (CPS) on which the CPA is based; CPS activities; and the role CPA in future employment and training applications/interviews. Part 2 of the guide contains examples of and specific instructions for completing the following portfolio components: personal statement, resume, application, letter of recommendation, work samples, writing samples, and interpersonal skills evaluation. (MN)

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Far West
LABORATORY

Career Preparation Assessment

Portfolio Guidelines

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Fall 1995

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CE071045

Career Preparation Assessment

Portfolio Guidelines

Fall 1995

Abstract

Far West Laboratory (FWL) developed the Career Preparation Assessment (CPA) portfolio in partnership with the California Department of Education. The CPA portfolio focuses on high school students' mastery of the Career Preparation Standards (*Personal Skills, Interpersonal Skills, Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills, Communication Skills, Occupational Safety, Employment Literacy, and Technology Literacy*), and measures their achievement of those standards. Local schools and districts can use these standards as the basis for their systemic reform programs, such as Second To None, Carl Perkins, and the School-To-Work Opportunities Act. The Career Preparation Standards are closely aligned with other important frameworks such as the SCANS report.

Publication

These Guidelines for the Career Preparation Assessment (CPA) portfolio were produced by Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development in partnership with the California Department of Education (CDE). This document is supported by federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, contract number RP91002006. Its contents do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Education, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the United States Government.

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Far West Laboratory will join with Southwest Regional Laboratory in 1996 to become WestEd.

Acknowledgments

We thank the following people for their time and efforts:

Brent Andrew.....AirTouch Communications
Yolanda Bellisimo.....Beryl Buck Inst. for Education
Lisa Bookstein.....Madsen Personnel Services
Judi Brown.....Florin High School/CDE
Beverly Buchanan.....Abraham Lincoln High School
Marcia Bush.....California Dept. of Education
Carmen Clark.....S.F. County Transportation Dept.
Dan Cooper.....Eel River Sawmill
Angela Croce.....Mira Mesa High School
Richard Dahl.....California Dept. of Education
Charles Dayton.....Foothill Associates
Dave Diepenbrock.....The Herald Project
Bill Fales.....Ferndale High School
Irene Falzone.....Santa Barbara Senior High School
Ann Hollingsworth.....Rosewood Construction
Joan Hukari.....Far West Laboratory
Marla Keeth.....Pasadena Health Careers Academy
Vicki Minardi.....Bank of America
Doug Newman.....Ferndale High School
Judi Owen.....Blair High School
Allen Perlstein.....Blair High School
Chris Peterson.....Times Direct Marketing
Tom Ruiz.....International Studies Academy
Carra Sleight.....Charles Schwab
Ken Sorey.....Sgro Promo Associates
Frank Vernon.....Pacific Bell
Milt Werner.....Encinal High School

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Part 1- Overview

This section provides a profile of the CPA portfolio and the standards it measures.

- Introduction to the Career Preparation Assessment (CPA)
- A Special Note to Students
- Career Preparation Standards (CPS)
- CPS Activities
- How Your CPA Portfolio Fits into Your Future

Part 1

Introduction to the Career Preparation Assesment

Educators, parents, employers, and communities know well the need for all students to possess the academic and work readiness skills necessary for success after high school. Creating and implementing curricula and assessments which support the teaching and acquisition of those skills presents a formidable, dynamic challenge — schools which commit to adapting their teaching and assessment to elicit and measure those integrated academic and work readiness skills move in relatively uncharted educational environs. **This set of guidelines for the Career Preparation Assessment (CPA) portfolio aims to support those forward-thinking schools as they build new ways to make their students ready for the post-high school world.**

The CPA portfolio is a classroom-tested, employer-validated, performance-based assessment of career readiness skills for use by all high school teachers and students. It assists in the development and measurement of the Career Preparation Standards (CPS), a set of skills critical to success in post-secondary education and in the workplace. The CPS define skills in the following domains: Thinking and Problem-Solving, Communication, Technology Literacy, Interpersonal, Personal, Employment Literacy, and Occupational Safety. The CPS are closely aligned with other important frameworks such as the SCANS report and the New Standards Project Applied Learning standards.

During the pilot test of the CPA portfolio in the Spring of 1995, teachers and students found great flexibility in how the portfolio could be used; students submitted portfolios with work from classes ranging from math to art to agriculture to English. Teachers also found the portfolio effectively promoted cross-curricular collaboration. It provided a clear

target all teachers could support (student attainment of the CPS) and a simple framework (the portfolio) around which they could focus. Furthermore, scoring portfolios can serve as a vehicle for increasing parental and employer involvement in school — the portfolio's scoring rubric is designed to be applied effectively by students, educators, parents, employers, and other non-educators.

The CPA portfolio is designed to bolster innovative standards-driven change and school-to-career programs. Schools and districts can use the CPA as a basis for their reform efforts, such as Career Academies, Career Pathways, Second To None, and School-To-Work programs. The ongoing guidance of educators, students, parents, and employers; intensive review of student work from the 1995 Spring pilot test; and experience gained from four years of developing and implementing the Career-Technical Assessment Program (C-TAP) portfolio inform this edition of the CPA portfolio guidelines.

A Special Note to Students

CPA, Move Ahead of the Crowd!

Employers and colleges expect high school graduates to be ready for work or advanced training; they want people with strong academic skills who can think and apply knowledge, work with others, be responsible, communicate effectively, understand their field, and adapt to new technology. Your CPA portfolio will show how well you have met expectations of employers and colleges. The Career Preparation Standards define these expectations. Reviewed by educators and employers, these standards describe the knowledge and skills you need after high school. By completing the CPA portfolio, you will be better prepared for your chosen career.

CPA, You Have Control of Your Results!

Just like you, your CPA portfolio will be unique. It tells your story. You will have many opportunities to select what you want to include, organize your materials, reflect on your progress, and revise your work. Your teacher and these guidelines will help you finish the required CPA entries with step-by-step instructions and examples. See page 11 for a picture of the CPA portfolio.

CPA, Evaluate Your Work!

Your portfolio will be evaluated by you and your teacher. It may also be evaluated by a team of teachers, peers, parents, employers, and other community members. Read the instructions and the requirements very carefully so you know what is expected of you. Use the Requirements Summary Sheet (see pages 13 and 14) to evaluate your work and decide if you have met all the requirements.

Career Preparation Standards

Overview

The Career Preparation Standards (CPS) state the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully develop your career. You will need to strengthen these skills to succeed in advanced education, training, and on the job. Because achieving and demonstrating the CPS is critical to completing your CPA portfolio, you need to know the CPS well.

Career Preparation Standard 1
Personal Skills.

Good personal skills are very important in school and in work. Instructors and employers expect you to be responsible, self-disciplined, and able to manage your time and priorities well. This means being on time and meeting deadlines, being free from substance abuse, and maintaining good personal hygiene. Honesty and personal integrity are also expected on any job.

Examples of personal skills include:

- positive attitudes — willingly follow directions, take on tasks and responsibilities
- perseverance — complete a task even when it is difficult
- flexibility and initiative — adapt to change, apply your knowledge

Career Preparation Standard 2
Interpersonal Skills.

Today's classrooms and workplaces require that you be able to work as part of a team. You need to be able to work cooperatively with people of different ages and cultural backgrounds. When working with others it is important to understand how to resolve conflicts, negotiate, share responsibilities, accept supervision, and assume leadership roles.

Examples of interpersonal skills include:

- leadership — assign work and inspire co-workers to complete tasks
- following — accept a decision and help meet a goal
- teamwork — use group planning and goal-setting techniques to solve problems

Career Preparation Standard 3
Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills.

There are many ways to solve a problem. Good thinking and problem-solving skills will help you contribute solutions on the job. Employers and colleges will expect you to be able to think analytically and creatively, use logical reasoning, and interpret information. You may need to apply skills such as numerical estimation, measurement, calculation, and evaluation to solve problems.

Examples of thinking and problem-solving skills include:

- problem definition — recognize a problem and identify the relevant facts
- organization — identify and gather information needed to solve a problem
- analysis — evaluate and select information, and consider possible solutions to a problem

Career Preparation Standard 4
Communication Skills.

Strong communication skills are very important for school, for most jobs, and will help you in your job search. You must be able to speak, listen, read, and write effectively. When speaking and listening, you need to show that you can: take turns talking, listen and ask appropriate questions, and give and follow instructions. Effective writing means that you can: organize information, clearly present your own ideas, write with your audience in mind, and use correct grammar and spelling.

Examples of communication skills include:

- speaking and listening — speak clearly to convey ideas and listen to others
- writing — write effectively, using good sentence structure and vocabulary
- presentation — present a report and answer questions orally

Career Preparation Standard 5
Occupational Safety Skills.

You need to know how to work safely on the job so you can protect yourself and others from injury. All work environments contain possible safety hazards. You must follow safety rules and be able to operate equipment safely, avoid physical dangers, and properly handle hazardous materials. It is also important to know what to do in case of an emergency, such as a fire or earthquake.

Examples of occupational safety include:

- fire safety — demonstrate general fire safety habits, such as turning off appliances when not in use
- hazardous materials — know the procedures for the disposal of hazardous materials
- equipment — understand and demonstrate the correct and safe operation of equipment

Career Preparation Standard 6
Employment Literacy.

Due to the changing demands of the job market, you need to have a good understanding of career paths and how to find jobs in your chosen field. It is important for you to develop a career plan that describes your goals and plan of action. In order to develop a career plan, you need information about yourself, requirements for education or training, and the job market.

Examples of employment literacy include:

- knowledge of your skills — be aware of personal strengths, weaknesses, interests and abilities, and how they relate to specific career areas
- awareness of the job market — research current trends in the job market, such as jobs that are in high or low demand
- knowledge of career paths — investigate possible careers and entry-level positions with potential for growth

Career Preparation Standard 7
Technology Literacy.

Many jobs require computer skills, technical knowledge, and the ability to learn and adapt to new technologies. Employers expect you to be able to use technology to complete tasks and to improve your job performance.

Examples of technology literacy include:

- computer skills — select and use appropriate hardware and software
- audio and video skills — use audio and video equipment to document events effectively
- technical knowledge — solve a problem based on your knowledge of technology

Career Preparation Standards (CPS) Activities

Using standards, or using the CPS, may be new to you. Here are two activities you can do to become more familiar with the CPS.

CPS Activity #1

After reading the standards, think about recent experiences at school or at work in which you have used one or more of the CPS. Did you solve a problem in math (thinking and problem-solving skills)? Did you resolve a conflict with a friend or supervisor (interpersonal skills)? Did you learn a new program on the computer (technology literacy)?

1. Describe (in writing) an experience in which you have used one or more CPS.
2. Share that experience with your classmate(s) or your teacher. Explain how the experience relates to the CPS.
3. Reflect on how you could improve your CPS skills.

CPS Activity #2

1. Select a piece of work you recently completed in one of your classes. Examples of appropriate pieces of work include: a set of math problems, a research paper, a technical drawing, a science experiment, or a newsletter.
2. Underline each part that shows evidence of your skill in one of the CPS. Questions like these may help you: Did you analyze a problem (thinking and problem-solving skills)? Did you take responsibility to get needed information (personal skills)? Did you write about a career or a job (employment literacy)? Did you work with others (interpersonal skills)?
3. Explain to your partner or classmates why you think your work demonstrates you have skills in that CPS.

How Your CPA Portfolio Fits Into Your Future

Career Preparation Standards:

Personal Skills

Interpersonal Skills

Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills

Communication Skills

Occupational Safety

Employment Literacy

Technology Literacy

Portfolio Entries:

Personal Statement

Résumé

Application

Letter of Recommendation

Work Samples

Writing Sample

Interpersonal Skills Evaluation

Optional Entries

Part 2 - Instructions for the Portfolio

This section gives you instructions for each part of the CPA portfolio. Use the Requirements Summary Sheet and the CPA Portfolio Check-off List to monitor your progress. Your completed portfolio will contain the following entries:

- Personal Statement
- Résumé
- Application
- Letter of Recommendation
- 2 work samples
- Writing sample
- Interpersonal Skills Evaluation

Part 2

Requirements Summary Sheet

Use the information below to determine if your portfolio and the entries meet all CPA requirements. Check that each entry meets all of the requirements listed. Incomplete entries must be revised and made complete.

Personal Statement

Due on: _____

- ☐ include all of the following: career and education goals; special experiences and achievements that show your CPS skills
- ☐ no more than two pages
- ☐ free of all spelling, grammatical, and typographical mistakes
- ☐ neat, clear, and well organized
- ☐ typed or word processed

Résumé

Due on: _____

- ☐ complete, containing: contact information, goals or objectives, education, work experience (paid or unpaid), activities
- ☐ one page
- ☐ typed or word processed
- ☐ free of all spelling, grammatical, and typographical mistakes
- ☐ neat, organized, and easy to read

Application

Due on: _____

- ☐ completely filled in with no blank spaces
- ☐ neat and easy to read (typed is the best)
- ☐ free of all spelling, grammatical, and typographical mistakes

Letter of Recommendation

Due on: _____

- ☐ from an adult who knows your CPS skills
- ☐ typed or word processed

Work Samples

#1 Due on: _____ #2 Due on: _____

- ☐ your own work, something you did or created
- ☐ show sufficient evidence of your skills in technology and at least one other CPS
- ☐ include a summary for each

Writing Sample

Due on: _____

- ☐ show analytical reasoning
- ☐ 1 - 3 pages in length
- ☐ free of spelling, grammatical, and typographical mistakes
- ☐ neat, clear, and well organized
- ☐ include a summary

Interpersonal Skills Evaluation

Due on: _____

- ☐ completed by an adult (non-family member) who has observed you demonstrating your interpersonal skills for at least 20 hours

CPA Portfolio Check-off List

Use this list to monitor your progress and to see which CPS skills your portfolio demonstrates. First, make a check next to each required entry as you finish. Then, check off which standards are shown in each entry.

√	Entries	Standards						
		Personal	Interpersonal	Thinking and Problem-Solving	Communication	Occupational Safety	Employment Literacy	Technology Literacy
	Personal Statement							
	Résumé							
	Application							
	Letter of Recommendation							
	Work Sample #1							
	Work Sample #2							
	Writing Sample							
	Interpersonal Skills Evaluation							
	Optional Entries							

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Personal Statement

Overview

Your personal statement introduces you to people who review your portfolio. By reading your personal statement, employers and college admissions officers will learn about your ability: to communicate, organize ideas, and reflect on your own skills, achievements, and goals.

Step 1: Spend time thinking about your skills, experiences, achievements, and goals. Refer to your journal or other types of reflective writing.

Step 2: Decide which experiences and achievements best show your CPS skills.

Step 3: Write a first draft of your personal statement.

Step 4: Review your draft with teachers, family, and friends. Use their suggestions to revise your statement and write a second draft.

Step 5: Write your final personal statement using a computer or typewriter. Proofread and correct all mistakes.

Requirements

Your personal statement must be:

- complete, including all of the following:
  - career and education goals
  - special experiences
  - achievements that show your CPS skills
- no more than two pages, typed or word processed
- neat, clear, and well organized
- free of spelling, grammatical, and typographical mistakes

Examples

See the next page for examples of personal statements. Do not copy them.

Personal Statement Examples

Sue Washington's Personal Statement

As long as I can remember, I have always loved animals. This love has inspired me to reach for a career in Wildlife Management. I plan to go to Chico State for my bachelor's degree. During college, I will apply for as many internships with the Recreation and Park Service as I can. I believe that the work experiences will help my academic studies.

Upon graduation, I will apply to the Recreation and Park Service and other organizations that are dedicated to wildlife management. Our survival on this planet depends on maintaining a healthy environment.

Many of my high school experiences show the skills and abilities I have that relate to the Career Preparation Standards. For example, my FFA animal science project, "Raising Rabbits for Small Farms," shows my ability to plan and organize a complex task, solve problems, and communicate with fellow students. Another example that shows my leadership skills is my experience as team captain on the varsity basketball team.

One of the most important experiences I had was my volunteer work for the Explorers. I helped to clear trails, rebuild shelters, and even led a hike. Although these activities took a lot of time, I feel it helped to prepare me for a career in wildlife management. I spoke with many people who gave me great ideas for developing my own career. I will always be grateful for their guidance.

Pat Wong's Personal Statement

My Goals:

I want to run my own business someday. After high school graduation, I will take all of my required classes at the community college. After finishing at the community college, I will apply to a business program at one of the UC universities. I know that running a business is very complex and my academic studies will help prepare me. I also know that I need to keep working to gain "hands-on" experience, so I will get a part-time job as an office clerk. Combining work and school may lead to a tough schedule, but I will be ready to start a business by the time I am 25!

My Skills:

I have many of the skills listed in the Career Preparation Standards. I definitely have had many experiences that show my perseverance and responsibility. I won the Mayor's Achievement Award for volunteer work done at the peer counseling center and for our "Helping our Grandparents" program as well.

My interpersonal skills also improved during the science experiment we did last semester. We worked in teams of three and each of us had to negotiate "our role" in the experiment. I also improved my problem-solving ability because the experiment didn't work the first two times!

I have many skills in using computers, but I plan to learn more about computer technology while in college. In addition to learning more about technology, I know I need to improve my writing skills. I plan to take extra tutorials while I am in college to improve this.

I am very excited about my future and the many opportunities it holds for me!

Résumé

Overview

Your résumé is important evidence of your CPS experience and skills. Employers expect your résumé to be concise, neat, and well organized.

Step 1: Think of your experiences and skills that are related to the CPS. List your contact information (name, address, and phone), education, career goals, experiences, and activities on a piece of paper.

Step 2: Write a draft of your résumé. It must be only one page and contain all of the required information.

Step 3: Review your résumé with a teacher, employer, counselor, peers, and parents. Use their suggestions to revise your résumé and write a second draft.

Step 4: Type your résumé using a computer or typewriter. Proofread your résumé and correct all mistakes.

Requirements

Your résumé must be:

- complete, containing:
  - contact information
  - career goals or objectives
  - education
  - work experience (paid or unpaid)
  - activities
- one page
- typed or word processed
- free of spelling, grammatical, and typographical mistakes
- neat, organized, and easy to read

Examples

See the next page for examples of different résumé styles and formats.

Résumé Examples

Sue Washington
222 Fork Road
Temecula, CA 95000
(818) 777-9999

Goals

♦ I would like to obtain an advanced degree in Wildlife Management.

Education

♦ Attending Temecula High School, I have completed all college required courses with special emphasis on agricultural studies, biology, and art.
♦ Expected Graduation Date: June 1995

Experiences and Activities

♦ Varsity Basketball, Team Captain, 1992-95
♦ Watercolor Painter's Club, 1993-95
♦ Future Farmers of America, 1994-95
♦ Explorers, 1993-95

References available upon request.

Pat Wong
100 Bemis Road
Chico, CA 96000
(916) 444-5555

Seeking to obtain a position as office clerk.

General Business Skills include:

- filing
- answering busy telephones
- cooperative work style

Computer Skills include:

- word processing (Microsoft Word)
- desktop publishing (Pagemaker)

Education and Training:

- Certificate of Completion, Word Processing, Chico ROP, June 1994
- Pagemaker Course, Chico ROP, February 1995
- High School Diploma, Chico High School, June 1995

Awards:

- "Mayor's Achievement Award" for community volunteer work from 1991-95

Hobbies:

- Skiing, rollerblading, peer counseling

Objective:
As a medical assistant I will gain experience while studying to become a nurse practitioner.

Education:
June 1995 Med. Asst. Cert. from SFROP
May 1994 High School Diploma, Bernal High

Experience:
February-May 1995 Volunteer Aide, ABC Hospital, San Francisco. Duties: assisted nurses, greeted patients, transferred charts.
May-September 1994 Receptionist, West Portola Clinic, San Francisco. Duties: answering telephone, making appointments, filing charts.
August 1992-April 1994 Baby-sitter, Rosario Family, San Francisco. Duties: caring for two children, making meals.

Activities:
Hiking, reading, folk dancing.

There are many ways to format a résumé. These examples show you three styles; select the one you like best or create your own. Your résumé may contain more or different information than in the examples. Proof your résumé carefully to ensure it meets all of the requirements.

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Application

Overview

For every college, job, or training program to which you apply, you will complete an application. The ability to complete an application is a skill you will use throughout life. You must be able to understand the questions, know all the required information, and be able to fit your answers in limited spaces.

Step 1: Request an application form. For your CPA portfolio you may use an application for any of the following:

- college or university admissions
- training program
- job
- scholarship award

Step 2: Before writing, make a copy of the application form and save the original.

Step 3: Complete the first copy of the application in pencil. Answer every question. If a question does not apply to you, write "N/A" or "Not Applicable."

Step 4: Type or neatly write your final version on the original copy of the application. Proofread your work and correct all mistakes.

Requirements

Your application must be:

- completely filled in with no blank spaces
- neat and easy to read (typed is the best)
- free of all mistakes

Example

See the next page for an example.

Example of Application

APPLICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Our policy is to have competent employees and to select and promote them on the basis of ability and experience without regard to age, color, handicap, national origin, race, religion, or sex. Complete all blanks on this application form. If a question does not apply, write N/A.

PERSONAL

Name: Pacheco (Last) Jo (First) (Middle)	Date of application: 7/10/95
	Social Security Number: 437-29-5478
Address: 111 Smith Drive (Street) San Francisco, (City) CA (State) 94000 (ZIP)	
Home phone number: (415) 222-3333	Date available to start work: 7/17/95
Type of work desired: Medical Assistant	Salary desired: $12.00 per hour
If you are under 18 or over 70, please complete: Date of birth: / / N/A	Were you ever convicted of a misdemeanor or felony? No. If yes, explain:
If you are not a U.S. Citizen, what is your Alien Registration or Visa Classification number? N/A	

EMPLOYMENT *List all permanent, part-time, and summer positions you have held for the past ten years, including military service (most recent job first). Attach extra page if necessary.*

Name and address of employer: ABC Hospital 1200 Potrero Avenue, S.F., CA 94110 Name of supervisor: Ms. Judith Ceros Employed from (volunteer) 2/95 to 5/95 Hours per week: 15	Describe your responsibilities: assisted nurses, greeted patients, transferred charts Reason for leaving: seeking regular employment
Name and address of employer: West Portola Clinic 257 Portola Avenue, S.F., CA 94120 Name of supervisor: Mr. Ray Hamilton Employed from 5/94 to 9/94 Hours per week: 40	Describe your responsibilities: answering telephone, making appointments, sorting mail, filing charts Reason for leaving: summer position
Name and address of employer: Rosario Family 752 Poinsetta Drive S.F., CA 94122 Name of supervisor: Ms. Susanna Rosario Employed from 8/92 to 4/94 Hours per week: avg. 15	Describe your responsibilities: caring for 2 children after school, making meals, exercise & play time Reason for leaving: school work increased

EDUCATION *Record all schooling (most recent first). Attach extra page if necessary.*

Name and address of educational institution	Dates attended from	to	School years completed	major field	Degrees received or expected (if applicable)	
S.F. ROP 5107 Sloat Blvd. S.F., CA94127	9/12/94	6/23/95	1	Médical	Medical Asst.Cert.	
Bernal High School 369 Acacia Dr., S.F., CA 94125	9/90	5/94	4	Health	H.S. Diploma	
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

School, campus, professional, community, or leisure activities; special abilities; special honors: Vice President, S.F. ROP Communit Service Club, Chair, Bernal H.S Social Club and Prom Committee, Volunteer Babysitting Trainer, Bernal Heights Parenting Center, CPR Certification, Hiking, Reading, Dancing

I authorize this company to investigate all information on this application form and understand that a false statement or failure to disclose information may disqualify me from employment or result in dismissal if I am employed.

Signature of applicant: Jo Pacheco

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Letter of Recommendation

Overview

When seeking a job or admission to a college, you may be asked to give references or letters of recommendation. Letters of recommendation strengthen your résumé and application by providing supporting evidence of your skills.

Step 1: Make a list of all the adults who know you and your CPS achievements well. You should include the following: teachers, employers or supervisors (for paid and unpaid work), community and religious leaders.

Step 2: For each person list: name, telephone number, address, and number of years each person has known you.

Step 3: From your list, pick the names of at least three people who know the most about your CPS skills and experiences.

Step 4: Ask each one to write a letter of recommendation. Include in your request the following information: 1) date you need the letter; 2) number of years they have known you; and 3) what you want them to mention in the letter.

Step 5: After receiving your letter(s), thank each writer for his or her support and assistance.

Step 6: Select the best letter for your portfolio.

Requirements

Your letter of recommendation must be:

- from an adult who knows your CPS skills
- typed or word processed

Examples

See the next page for examples.

Examples of Letters of Recommendation

To Whom it May Concern:

Sue Washington has been an active, invaluable member of the local Explorers Club for the past three years. In the years I have known her, I have watched her develop an impressive leadership ability and skill in working cooperatively with others. Given her leadership skills, keen sense of responsibility, and love of nature, I was pleased to learn of Sue's intent to pursue a career in wildlife management.

Sue is a self-directed, confident, and conscientious young woman. She is quite good at identifying a need or problem, finding a way to solve it and following a plan through to its conclusion. For example, Sue noticed that many of her classmates did not use the nearby regional parks for hiking or cycling. She led a Junior Class hike, with assistance from her school and the club. Sue worked with other club members and her high school biology teacher, Ms. Steinman, to organize the hike. Sue led the hike and Ms. Steinman talked to the group about plant biology and native plant life. The hike was a great success and many of Sue's classmates commented that they planned to use the park more often.

I feel confident that Sue has the skills and dedication it takes to be successful in this field. I strongly recommend Sue for admission to college as well as any entry-level job she may apply for in the field of wildlife management.

Sincerely,

Frank Voltz
Club Leader
Explorers

To Whom it May Concern:

I am pleased to recommend Pat Wong for an entry-level office position. I have known Pat for three years. He has been a student in one of my classes for one and a half of those years, and I have supervised his volunteer work in our school's peer counseling center for the past two years.

Pat is a great organizer and works very hard to accomplish his goals. He has been an integral part of the Peer Counseling Center. When we opened the Center last fall, we had a great need for someone with good office and computer skills. Although Pat was already volunteering as a peer counselor, he offered his assistance in setting up our filing system and providing help with word processing tasks. There was a lot to be done and a lot to learn, but Pat persevered and was a tremendous help to us. Pat gets along wonderfully with both staff and students. He is a great peer counselor and relates very well to diverse students.

I feel certain that Pat's computer and organizational skills, and his ability to work well with others, will be an asset to any company. In addition, I am confident that Pat has the potential and drive he will need to become a successful businessman and possibly business owner.

Sincerely,

Maria Lopez
Algebra Teacher and
Supervising Faculty
Chico High School Peer
Counseling Center

Work Samples

Overview

In addition to résumés and applications, more and more employers and colleges want to see actual evidence of your skills and abilities. Your CPA portfolio must contain at least two work samples: one of the two work samples must show your ability to use technology; the other must demonstrate other CPS skills. For each work sample, you will write a summary that shows how well you understand, and can reflect on, your work sample. You may do the work samples in class, on the job, or at home. See page 25 for work sample ideas.

Step 1: Review the CPS (see pages 6 to 9). Make a list of possible work samples to show your level of skill. See the next page for examples. (A technology work sample that shows skills only in word processing is not acceptable.)

Step 2: Select the work samples which best show your skills. You should discuss your selections with a teacher.

Step 3: Plan the evidence you will need to collect or create to show your work. If you use photographs, mount them securely and add captions.

Step 4: Complete the summary form for each work sample and use the summary forms to write the first drafts of your summaries.

Step 5: Write your final summaries and clip together with the evidence.

Requirements

Your two work samples must:

- be your own work, something you did or created
- show sufficient evidence of your skills in technology and at least one other CPS skill
- include a summary for each that explains what skills are demonstrated by that work sample

Work Sample Ideas

One work sample must show your skills in using technology. Here are some examples of acceptable work samples:

- brochure or poster using a desktop publishing program
- audiotape of music using a synthesizer
- poster, using photo silk-screen printing
- results of a weather experiment using software from the Internet
- printout of research or discussions using Internet resources
- logo and letterhead design using desktop publishing
- computer aided drafting (CAD) project
- database report printout
- college budget made with a spreadsheet program

Here are examples of work samples that show other CPS skills (non-technology):

- team science experiment (thinking and problem-solving, interpersonal)
- statistical analysis of a school-wide survey (thinking and problem-solving)
- family budget including a personal financial plan (personal skills)
- photographs showing participation in a community event (interpersonal, problem-solving, communication)
- lesson plans for tutoring younger students in math (communication, interpersonal skills, thinking and problem-solving)
- technical drawings and photographs of a completed cabinet (thinking and problem-solving)
- emergency poster showing escape routes for the school and information on handling emergencies (occupational safety, communication)
- schedule of appointments and activities for peer career counseling (interpersonal, employment literacy, communication)

Work Sample Summaries

Overview

A work sample summary describes the CPS skills demonstrated in your work. These summaries help employers or college admissions officers to look for evidence of the CPS skills as they review your work samples. You must complete a separate summary for each work sample.

Step 1: Review your work and answer each question on the Summary Form. See pages 27 and 28 for forms.

Step 2: Write your summary based on your answers.

Step 3: Proofread your summary and correct all mistakes.

Step 4: Type your final summary on a separate piece of paper and attach it to the work sample.

Requirements

Your summaries must:

- be complete, including a description of the work and the demonstrated CPS skills
- contain self-evaluation of the work
- be neat, clear, and well organized
- be free of spelling, grammatical, and typographical mistakes

Example

See page 29 for an example.

Work Sample Summary Form

Each work sample must have its own summary. Answering these questions will help you write your summaries. See page 29 for an example of a summary.

Work Sample Summary Form	
Student's Name:	
Date:	
1. What is your work sample and how did you complete it?	
2. What CPS skills are shown in your work and how?	
Skill	**How is it shown?**
Skill	**How is it shown?**
Skill	**How is it shown?**
3. How would you evaluate your work? What skills are your strongest?	
4. What could you improve about this work or do better next time?	

Additional Work Sample Summary Form

Work Sample Summary Form	
Student's Name:	
Date:	
1. What is your work sample and how did you complete it?	
2. What CPS skills are shown in your work and how?	
Skill	**How is it shown?**
Skill	**How is it shown?**
Skill	**How is it shown?**
3. How would you evaluate your work? What skills are your strongest?	
4. What could you improve about this work or do better next time?	

Example of Work Sample Summary

Pat Wong, Work Sample 1:
Brochure Design Using Pagemaker

My first work sample is a brochure I designed using the software PageMaker. I designed the brochure to describe the peer counseling services provided at my school. I interviewed our teacher and some of the counselors to get ideas for the brochure. Later, I showed them my first draft and made many changes.

The finished brochure shows my ability to use software to create a product. I learned more about using Pagemaker as I completed the brochure. This work sample shows my ability to use technology because I had to use two software programs on a computer. It also shows my interpersonal and communication skills because I had to interview several people and write up the information in a very small space.

Although my brochure is not as professional as those made by an advertising company, my brochure is being used by our school office and given to all new students! I like the way it came out and feel that the brochure shows my creativity. This work sample also shows my very strong communication skills. The next brochure I do, I will try to use color in the design for a stronger effect.

Writing Sample

Overview

Good writing is one of the most important skills for work and for college. Your writing sample should show your ability to analyze information, organize your thoughts, and communicate clearly in writing. Your selected piece shows these abilities by including conclusions or opinions based on factual information and evidence.

Step 1: Review samples of your writing from a variety of classes (business, history, science, English, art, math, health, etc.).

Step 2: Select the best piece of writing — 1 to 3 pages — that shows your analytical and writing skills. (You may write a new piece or you may select an excerpt from a longer paper.)

Step 3: Review the selected sample. Rewrite any part to improve the clarity, grammar, or organization.

Step 4: Type or word process your writing sample. Proofread your work and correct all mistakes.

Step 5: Write a summary that explains why you selected this piece and what CPS skills it shows. See page 31 for information on how to write a summary, and page 32 for the summary form. See page 33 for an example.

Step 6: Type or word process your summary and clip together with your writing sample.

Requirements

Your writing sample must:

- show analytical reasoning
- be neat, clear, well organized
- be free of spelling, grammatical, and typographical mistakes
- be 1-3 pages long
- include a summary

Writing Sample Summary

Overview

A writing sample summary describes the CPS skills demonstrated in your work. A summary helps employers or college admissions officers to look for evidence of the CPS skills as they review your writing sample.

Step 1: Review your writing sample and answer each question on the Summary Form. See page 32 for the form.

Step 2: Write your summary based on your answers.

Step 3: Proofread your summary and correct all mistakes.

Step 4: Type your final summary on a separate piece of paper and attach it to the writing sample.

Requirements

Your summary must:

- be complete, including a description of the work and the demonstrated CPS skills
- contain self-evaluation of the work
- be neat, clear, and well organized
- be free of spelling, grammatical, and typographical mistakes

Example

See page 33 for an example.

Writing Sample Summary Form

Your writing sample must have its own summary. Answering these questions will help you write your summary. See page 33 for an example of a summary.

Writing Sample Summary Form	
Student's Name:	
Date:	
1. Describe your writing sample.	
2. Explain what CPS skills are shown in your writing sample and how.	
Skill	**How is it shown?**
Skill	**How is it shown?**
Skill	**How is it shown?**
3. How would you evaluate your wrinting sample? What skills are your strongest?	
4. What could you improve about this writing sample or do better next time?	

Example of Writing Sample Summary

Jo Pacheco, Writing Sample:
"How Medical Technology has Changed Medical Practice"

My writing sample is two pages from a research report I wrote for my medical science class. I focused my research on diseases of the human body and how new technologies have led to new techniques of diagnosis. The section I included is about how medical researchers use monoclonal antibodies to detect disease and includes my final recommendations.

In addition to showing my communication and thinking and problem-solving skills, this writing sample shows my ability to organize and analyze information. It also shows my interpersonal skills as I interviewed a researcher at the ABC Hospital to get current information. I structured the information in the paper so that the reader can easily follow my ideas. I made sure to support all of my conclusions with evidence.

This was one of the most interesting classes I took and the report was the best I ever wrote. It is my best work because it is written clearly and because it takes information, analyzes it, and makes conclusions that are supported by evidence. I worked very hard on this report (I rewrote it three times!) and I learned so much about new medical research practices. If I did this report again, I would like to interview more researchers and hospital workers to include a greater range of opinions in the report.

Interpersonal Skills Evaluation

Overview

Working with other people can be challenging and rewarding. In college and on the job, you will have to cooperate with fellow students or co-workers. Developing interpersonal skills will help you be successful.

Step 1: Review the Interpersonal Skills Evaluation (ISE) Form on the next two pages. Read the interpersonal skills standard from the CPS.

Step 2: Identify the adult you wish to complete your ISE Form. Your evaluator must have observed you in a school or work setting for at least 20 hours. Your evaluator could be a teacher, supervisor (for paid or unpaid work), coach, community or religious leader. Your evaluator cannot be a family member.

Step 3: Bring the ISE Form to your evaluator and review the interpersonal skills standard and the ratings together.

Step 4: Write in your name and school name on the form.

Step 5: Ask your evaluator to complete the form and set a date when you can review your rating with your evaluator and pick up the completed form.

Requirements

Your ISE Form must be:

- completed by an adult (non-family member) who has observed your interpersonal skills for at least 20 hours

Interpersonal Skills Evaluation Form Instructions

Purpose

Employers and educators agree that interpersonal skills are very important for a successful career. This Interpersonal Skills Evaluation gives students the opportunity to experience a job-like evaluation of their interpersonal skills.

Directions For Evaluator

This form is to be completed by an adult who has observed the student for at least 20 hours on the job (paid or unpaid), in the classroom, or in the community. You and the student should discuss the interpersonal skills standard (see below), key elements of the standard, and the rating levels in advance of the evaluation.

The Interpersonal Skills Standard

The standard: Student will understand key concepts in group dynamics, conflict resolution, and negotiation. He or she will work cooperatively, share responsibilities, accept supervision, and assume leadership roles. He or she will demonstrate cooperative working relationships across gender and cultural groups.

Key elements of the standard are:

Cooperation: Student works cooperatively as a team member in group settings. Student works well with individuals of both genders, all ages, different cultural backgrounds, and those with special needs.

Shared Responsibility: Student coordinates tasks with team members and shares responsibility for group work.

Leadership: Student demonstrates leadership skills when appropriate.

Conflict Resolution: Student demonstrates skill at resolving conflicts by negotiating solutions.

Rating

After you have rated the student, meet with the student to review your rating and reasons for it. Rate the student using these three performance levels:

- **Advanced:** outstanding performance, demonstrates superior skill
- **Proficient:** good performance, demonstrates satisfactory skill
- **Needs Substantial Improvement:** inadequate performance

Interpersonal Skills Evaluation Form

Student Name: _____

School Name: _____

Evaluator Name and Title: _____

Context Information:

How many hours did you observe the student? ___ 20-30 ___ 31-40 ___ 41-50 ___ 51-60 ___ 61-70 ___ other: _____

What was the setting for the observation? ___ classroom ___ on the job (paid) ___ volunteer ___ other:_____

Please list 3-5 tasks requiring interpersonal skills that you observed the student complete:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Skills Evaluation (check one rating for each):

Interpersonal Skills	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Substantial Improvement
Cooperation/Interaction			
Shared Responsibility			
Leadership			
Conflict Resolution			
Overall Evaluation			

Comments:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Optional Entries

Overview

Employers or college admissions officers may be interested in additional activities, hobbies, awards, or achievements you have. You may add any entries that show a strength, skill, or unique accomplishment. You must write a summary that explains what each optional entry shows about your CPS skills.

Step 1: Identify appropriate optional entries. You may include any of the following:

- attendance records
- transcript with your grade point average (GPA)
- certificates, awards
- thank-you letter from an employer

Step 2: Write a summary for each optional entry that explains why you selected this piece and what it shows about you. See page 38 for the Summary Form.

Step 3: Type or word process your summaries and clip together with each optional entry.

Optional Entry Summary Form

Answer these questions to help you write your required summary. Each optional entry must have its own summary.

Optional Entry Summary Form	
Student's Name:	
Date:	
1. What is your optional entry?	
2. Explain what CPS skills are shown in your entry and how.	
Skill	**How is it shown?**
Skill	**How is it shown?**
Skill	**How is it shown?**
3. How would you evaluate your optional entry? What skills are your strongest?	
4. What could you improve about this entry or do better next time?	

Finishing Your Portfolio

You must make sure that your portfolio is complete and looks professional. To impress college admissions officers and employers, everything in your portfolio should be typed or word processed and arranged neatly. Use these steps to help you finish your portfolio.

1. Do you have the required entries you need to complete your portfolio? Check-off each entry on this list.

- ☐ Personal Statement
- ☐ Resume
- ☐ Application
- ☐ Letter of Recommendation
- ☐ Work Sample #1
- ☐ Work Sample #2
- ☐ Writing Sample
- ☐ Interpersonal Skills Evaluation
- ☐ Optional Entries
  List them here: _____
  _____

2. Is everything typed (that can be typed) or word processed?
3. Are any included pictures glued firmly onto the page with their captions?
4. Did you add a table of contents and a cover page?
5. Do you feel that this portfolio presents you at your best?

If you can answer **YES** to all of these questions, you are **ready to go**!!! Be proud of your work — show it to everyone.